

SCHOLAR  
SUCCESS GUIDE  
**GRADE 09**





**I PLEDGE** to graduate with a minimum of a Core 40 diploma from a state-accredited Indiana high school. I will participate in the Scholar Success Program that helps me plan, prepare and pay for college success. I will achieve a cumulative high school GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. I will not use illegal drugs or alcohol or commit a crime or delinquent act. I will apply for admission to an eligible Indiana college or university my senior year and apply on time for student financial aid. I aim **TO SUCCEED.**

Dear Student,

***Congratulations on becoming a 21st Century Scholar!***

As a 9th grader, you may think college is a long way off, but there are steps you should take now to stay on track for success.

Even if you don't know exactly what career you want to pursue or what type of college you want to attend, it's important to start thinking about it now and make a plan that will help you reach your goals.

That's why Indiana developed the Scholar Success Program. At each grade level, you will complete practical activities that will help you plan, prepare and pay for education beyond high school.

There are also many other things you can do now to prepare for success:

- ✓ **Work hard in school.** Develop consistent study habits, earn good grades and take those challenging courses that will help prepare you for college.
- ✓ **Get involved outside the classroom.** Did you know colleges look for well-rounded students who demonstrate leadership and are involved in their schools and communities? Stand out by getting involved with extracurricular activities at school and taking advantage of volunteer opportunities. It's also a good way to make friends and explore your interests.
- ✓ **Start saving for college.** It's never too early — or too late — for you and your family to start thinking about saving and paying for college. The 21st Century Scholarship covers up to four years of college tuition, but there are additional expenses — such as books and meal plans — to consider. Do some research to understand what college costs, what financial aid is available and what steps you will need to take to pay for additional expenses.

The Scholar Success Program has several requirements you must complete each year of high school to earn your scholarship. This guide will help connect you and your family to the resources and information you need to know to complete your 9th-grade steps.

Take control of your future by making smart choices and staying on track for college and career success.

Have a great school year!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Teresa Lubbers".

Teresa Lubbers  
Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education



YOU  
ARE  
WELL  
ON  
YOUR  
WAY

**AVERAGE STARTING SALARY**  
for a college grad with  
a Bachelor's Degree is  
**\$45,000<sup>1</sup>**

**BY THE YEAR 2018**  
**60% OF JOBS**  
will require education  
beyond high school<sup>2</sup>

**JOB SECURITY**  
for college grads  
vs. high school grads is  
**50% HIGHER<sup>3</sup>**





1. 2013 NACE Salary Survey, National Association of College and Employers  
2. Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements Through 2018, Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce  
3. Forbes.com

# SCHOLAR SUCCESS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

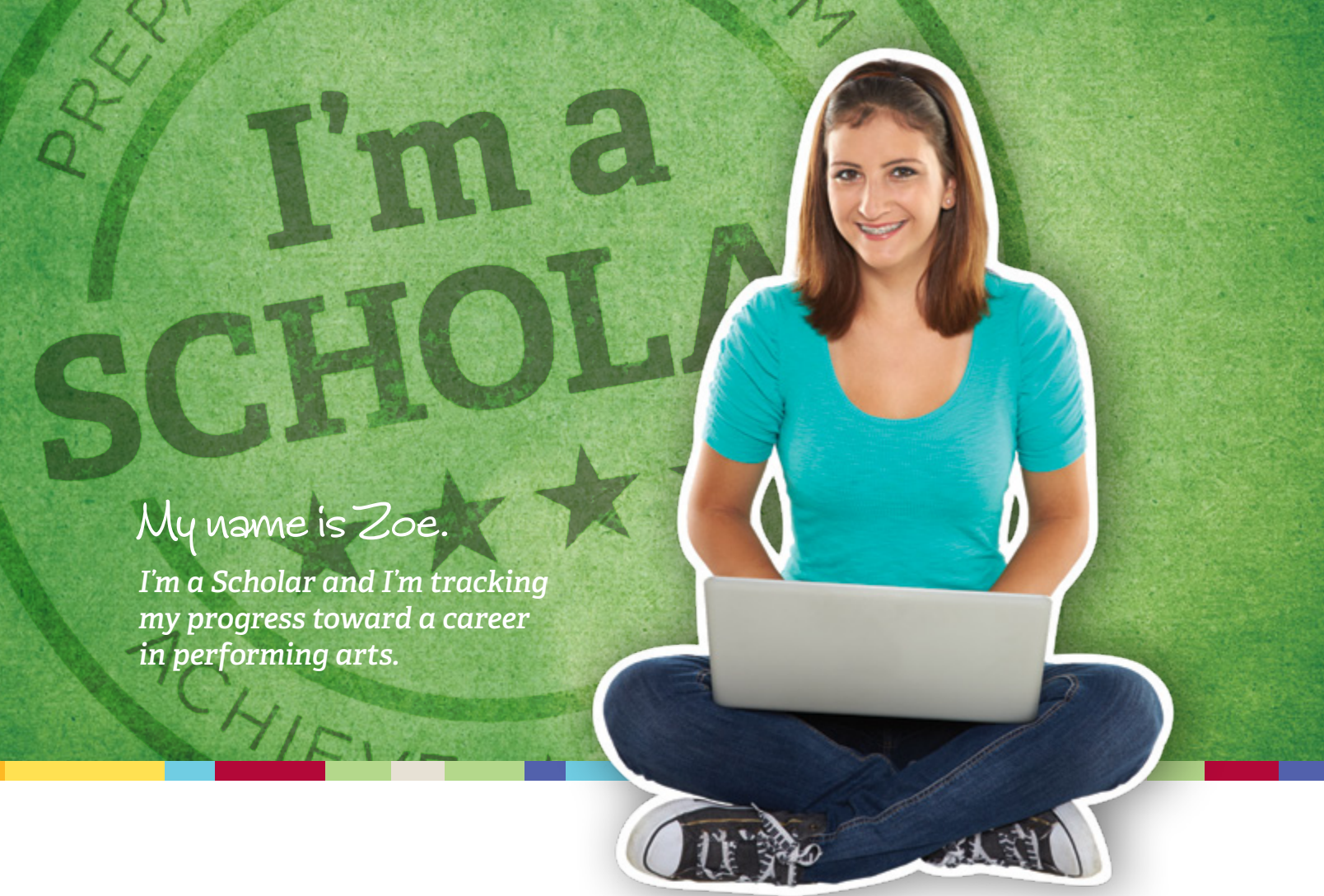
The chart below shows all 12 required activities that you must complete during high school to receive your 21st Century Scholarship. The following pages provide instructions and resources to help you complete the 9th-grade activities.

In addition to completing these requirements, Scholars are required to **PERFORM Academically**. You must graduate from high school with a Core 40 diploma and a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. You are also highly encouraged to pursue a Core 40 diploma with Academic Honors or Technical Honors to increase your level of academic preparation and to provide you with the widest range of options after high school graduation.

	 PLAN	 PREPARE	 PAY
09	Create Your Graduation Plan <sup>1</sup>	Participate in an Extracurricular or Service Activity	Watch "Paying for College 101"
10	Take a Career Interest Assessment	Get Workplace Experience <sup>2</sup>	Complete the College Costs Estimator
11	Visit a College Campus	Take a College Entrance Exam (ACT/SAT)	Search for Scholarships <sup>3</sup>
12	Submit Your College Application	Watch "College Success 101"	File Your FAFSA

1. Plan should be updated annually to keep you on track for high school graduation and college admission.  
2. Includes job-shadowing, internship, part-time employment or related experience linked to your career aspirations.  
3. Includes any additional scholarship opportunity beyond the 21st Century Scholarship.





WRITE YOUR SCHOLARTRACK USERNAME AND PASSWORD ON THE BACK OF YOUR SCHOLAR ID CARD AND KEEP IT WITH YOU.



## SCHOLARTRACK

Tracking your progress toward earning your 21st Century Scholarship is simple! ScholarTrack is an online tool that will guide you through the Scholar Success Program. You'll be able to manage your progress throughout high school and find many resources to help you complete the requirements. Create a personalized account at **Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack** to get started.

### Keep your contact information updated

Throughout high school, you will receive information and resources to help you stay on track. Keep your mailing address, email address and phone number up to date to make sure you don't miss anything. If your contact information changes at any point, log in to your ScholarTrack account and make the necessary updates.

### Don't have a computer?

If you do not have a computer with Internet access at home, use a computer at school, a public library or a friend's house. Or talk to your school counselor, parents or teachers for help finding a computer with Internet access.

# GET STARTED

at [Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack](https://Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack)

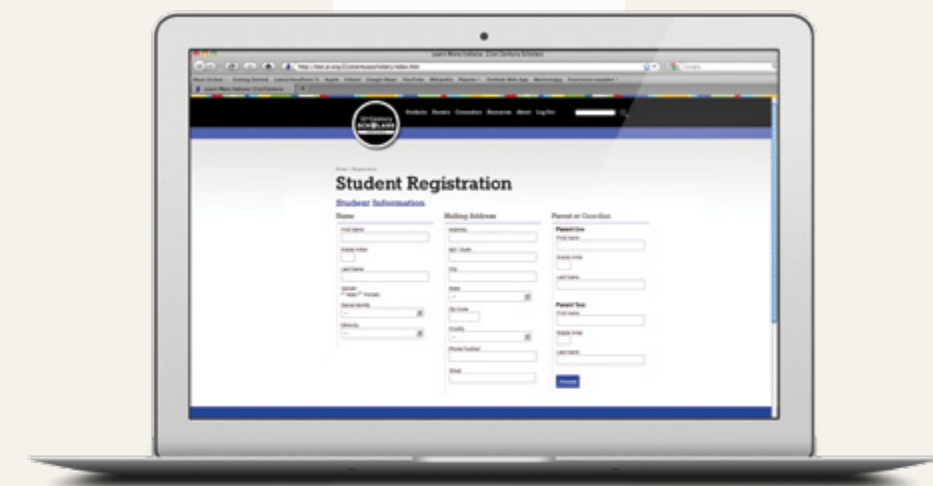
## 1. CLICK "LOG IN"

Visit **Scholars.IN.gov** and click the "log in" tab to create an account using your Scholar ID number.



## 2. CREATE A PROFILE

Your Scholar profile will help us better understand you and your education goals. Keep everything up to date — especially your contact info — so we can stay in touch!



## 3. START TRACKING

Use the student dashboard to track your progress and access important resources.





# GRADE 9 CHECKLIST

## What steps must you take now to achieve your goals?

If you're not sure, that's okay! That's the whole point of the Scholar Success Program: To guide you every step of the way as you **PLAN**, **PREPARE** and **PAY** for college and career success.

In 9th grade, your Scholar Success Program requirements will put you on the right track as you create a high school Graduation Plan, participate in an extracurricular or service activity, and watch the "Paying for College 101" video.

On the next few pages, we'll walk you through each of the steps and direct you to the resources you'll need to check them off your list and continue on your way to success!

## PLAN: CREATE YOUR GRADUATION PLAN.

Based on your college and career plans and the type of Core 40 diploma you plan to pursue, map out a four-year high school plan with your school counselor. See pages 8-9 for more information.

## PREPARE: PARTICIPATE IN AN EXTRACURRICULAR OR SERVICE ACTIVITY.

Choose one or two activities to focus on during high school. These experiences prepare you for college, help you explore your career interests and introduce you to new people. See pages 10-11 for more information.

## PAY: WATCH THE "PAYING FOR COLLEGE 101" VIDEO.

Find out what costs are involved in going to college and how to save and manage your money. Your 21st Century Scholarship may cover up to four years of tuition, but you must plan for additional expenses. See pages 12-13 for more information.

My name is Ozzie.

*I'm a Scholar and I'm thinking about a career in either audio engineering or graphic design.*

## Do you have any idea where you may want to go to college? What do you think you might study?

I have visited Ball State a few times to see what a college campus is like. I am interested in either audio engineering or graphic design — something where I can really express myself.

## What extracurricular activities do you participate in?

I really enjoy music. I like to DJ and produce music. I am involved in a group called SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and it has a music program.

## How are you preparing for college?

I am really focused now on getting good grades so I can get into college. I am excited about all of the opportunities and taking control of my college path.





# PLAN for college

## START YOUR GRADUATION PLAN.

*In 9th grade, you must create a high school Graduation Plan that keeps you on track to earn a Core 40 diploma, meet college admission requirements and achieve your career goals.*

WHAT TESTS  
WILL I NEED  
TO TAKE?

WHICH CLASSES DO  
I NEED TO TAKE?

WHAT ARE MY  
COLLEGE PLANS?

WHAT ARE  
MY CAREER  
INTERESTS?

### What is a Graduation Plan?

A Graduation Plan helps you understand what courses, tests and related steps you need to complete in high school so you have a clear path to graduation and a solid academic foundation to achieve your college and career goals. It also helps you track your test scores, course grades and grade point average (GPA).

Your school counselor can help you develop your Graduation Plan, with input from your parents or guardians. You should start your plan as a freshman and update it throughout high school with your courses, grades and any changes in your career path.

### How to start a Graduation Plan

The easiest way for you to keep your Graduation Plan up to date is by using the Indiana Career Explorer website, a free tool provided by the state of Indiana to help you with college and career planning. Go to [IndianaCareerExplorer.com](http://IndianaCareerExplorer.com) and click "new users register here." Then follow these steps:

- 1. SET UP** a profile and create a username and password.
- 2. CLICK** the blue "My Portfolio" tab and then select "Indiana Graduation Plan."
- 3. CREATE** your Graduation Plan. Fill out as much as you can and then log back in whenever you have updates.

For tips on filling out your plan, an instructional video is available at [Scholars.IN.gov/gradplanvideo](http://Scholars.IN.gov/gradplanvideo).



TO CREATE YOUR GRADUATION PLAN ONLINE,  
VISIT [IndianaCareerExplorer.com](http://IndianaCareerExplorer.com).

### Download a printer-friendly PDF of the Graduation Plan

You can also start your Graduation Plan on paper. Visit [Scholars.IN.gov/gradplan](http://Scholars.IN.gov/gradplan) to download a printable PDF version of the Graduation Plan. Fill out what you can on your own, and then take it with you to your next school counselor meeting.

If you do not have a computer with Internet access at home, use a computer at school, a public library or a friend's house.



### COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENT!

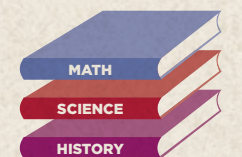
After creating your Graduation Plan, log in to your ScholarTrack account at [Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack](http://Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack) to answer a few questions that confirm you've completed this requirement.

**MEET  
WITH YOUR  
SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR  
REGULARLY  
TO HELP YOU  
MAINTAIN  
YOUR PLAN.**

Bring a paper copy of your Graduation Plan with you or ask your school counselor if you can view the online version together using Indiana Career Explorer.

You should meet with your counselor at least twice a year. Each time you meet, be prepared to answer questions about your:

COURSE  
PLAN



TESTING  
PLAN



CAREER  
PATH



GRADES  
& GPA



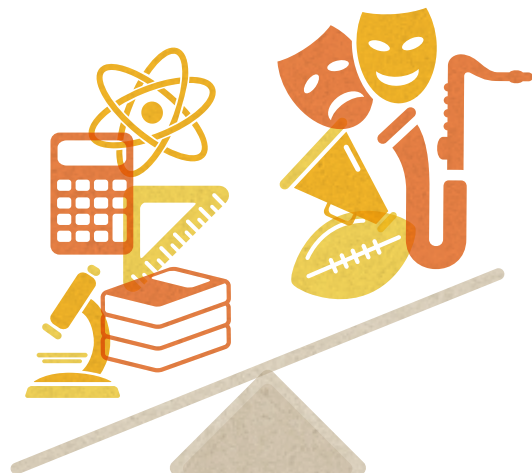


# PREPARE for college

**PARTICIPATE IN AN EXTRACURRICULAR OR SERVICE ACTIVITY.** *Getting involved in these activities during high school is a great way to prepare for college, explore your interests and make friends.*

SCHOOL WORK  
SHOULD BE  
YOUR NUMBER  
ONE PRIORITY!

BE SURE TO  
BALANCE  
YOUR ACTIVITIES  
WITH YOUR  
STUDIES.



## What are extracurricular and service activities?

Schools typically offer a wide range of activities outside of regular school work, such as band, chorus, athletics, theater, student newspaper, school yearbook, student council and a variety of clubs.

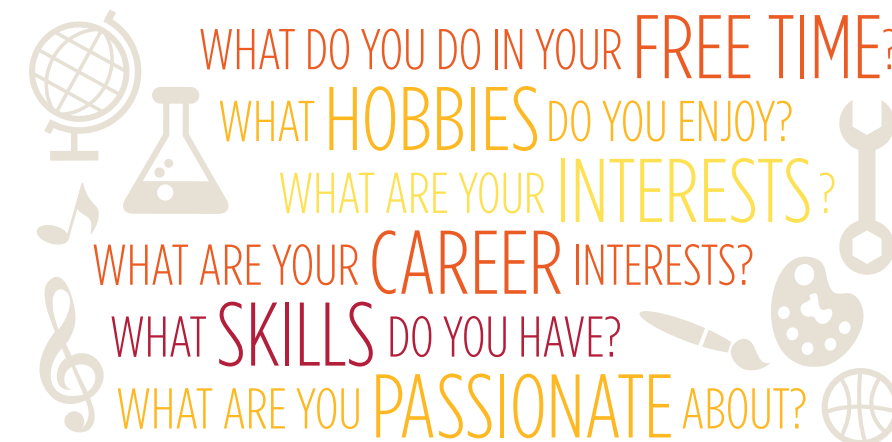
The activity you choose does not have to be school-sponsored. You can also get involved in a variety of service activities in your community through your church, local youth organizations or community centers.

Service activities — commonly known as “volunteering” or “community service” — are any unpaid volunteer efforts that benefit a specific group or the wider community.

## Why do it?

Students who are involved in extracurricular and service activities learn how to prioritize and manage their time. You will gain confidence, build character, and develop leadership and social skills. Showing a commitment to these kinds of activities also demonstrates to others, including colleges, that you are a capable and active member in the community.

Getting involved outside the classroom is important for college applications, but it is also important for personal growth. Participating in these types of activities will give you a chance to explore your interests, and enjoy new experiences, and may even pave the way for a future career.



## Choosing an activity

- Consider your interests and skills, as well as causes that are important to you. Select activities that you'll find worthwhile.
- Consider your career interests, too. Explore activities that match up with careers you're thinking about.
- There are plenty of opportunities to get involved. Pay attention to announcements, fliers and websites for information.
- Before you commit, find out what participation involves. How much time outside of school will it take? Will you need transportation? Discuss the details with your parents or guardians.
- If you aren't sure how to get involved in activities, talk to your school counselor, a teacher, a family member, a mentor or another caring adult for help.
- Don't get over-involved. School work should remain your number one priority. Pick just one or two activities.

## COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENT!

After participating in your selected activity(ies), log in to your ScholarTrack account at **Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack** to answer a few questions that confirm you've completed this requirement.

## SOME VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER:

- Animal shelters or veterinary clinics
- Churches
- Daycare centers
- Environmental organizations
- Food banks or soup kitchens
- Garden centers
- Homeless shelters
- Local hospitals or health care facilities
- Nursing homes or assisted living facilities
- Preschools and elementary schools
- Public libraries
- Summer camps
- Youth-serving organizations





# PAY for college

WATCH THE “PAYING FOR COLLEGE 101” VIDEO. *As a freshman, it’s time to think about the costs involved in going to college, as well as how to save and manage your money.*

DON'T LET  
THE COST  
OF COLLEGE  
STRESS  
YOU OUT!

THERE ARE  
LOTS OF  
THINGS YOU  
CAN DO NOW  
TO PAY FOR  
COLLEGE.



You and your family should know exactly what expenses your 21st Century Scholarship does and does not cover so that you can be prepared to pay the additional costs of college.

The more you learn now about the reality of paying for college, the better equipped you will be to start searching for additional scholarships as a junior and navigating the financial aid process as a senior. And developing good spending habits, creating a budget and saving money in a bank account will serve you well now, as a college student and throughout your life.

### How much does it cost to go to college?

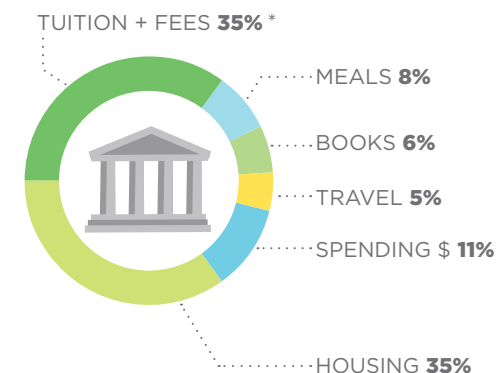
“Paying for College 101” is a video that helps you and your family understand what you need to know and what you need to do to pay for your college education.

It covers some important topics, such as:

- Why college is important and how to pay for it
- Understanding your 21st Century Scholarship (what it pays for and what it doesn’t)
- Your financial aid options and how to apply for financial aid

Go to [Scholars.IN.gov/payingforcollege](https://scholars.in.gov/payingforcollege) to view the “Paying for College 101” video. It takes about 25 minutes to complete. If you do not have a computer with Internet access at home, use a computer at school, a public library or a friend’s house. Or talk to your school counselor, parents or teachers for help finding a computer with Internet access.

YOUR 21st CENTURY SCHOLARSHIP WILL ONLY COVER TUITION AND REQUIRED FEES, SO YOU SHOULD PLAN TO SAVE FOR ADDITIONAL COSTS.



### Other helpful activities

The earlier you start saving for college, the better! In addition to watching “Paying for College 101,” consider doing the following:

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH.** Review additional resources and tools at [IN.gov/cashforcollege](https://in.gov/cashforcollege).
- **TALK WITH YOUR PARENTS.** Make sure you and your parents both understand the requirements for earning and keeping your 21st Century Scholarship, and what your scholarship does and does not cover. Talk about how you and your family plan to save money for college and budget accordingly.
- **SAVE YOUR PENNIES.** Consider opening a bank account or tax-free Indiana CollegeChoice 529 Savings Plan ([CollegeChoiceDirect.com](https://CollegeChoiceDirect.com)). Even a small contribution each month will make a difference.
- **DO THE MATH.** Download the Indiana College Costs Estimator app (for iPhone and Android phones) to calculate your college expenses and learn more about financial resources. For more information, visit [Scholars.IN.gov/collegecostsestimator](https://scholars.in.gov/collegecostsestimator).

\*Based on estimated college costs for in-state residents at a four-year public university. ABCnews.com via SayStudent.com.



### COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENT!

After watching the “Paying for College 101” video, log in to your ScholarTrack account at [Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack](https://scholars.in.gov/scholartrack) to complete a brief quiz.

## WHAT COLLEGE EXPENSES DO I NEED TO PLAN FOR?



TUITION  
+



HOUSING  
+



BOOKS  
+



MEALS  
+



SPENDING MONEY





*My name is Janelle.*

*I'm a Scholar and I'm working toward a career in broadcasting and telecommunications.*

### ***Have you decided where you're going to college and what you might study?***

Either Indiana University or Ball State. I plan to major in telecommunications. I want to be a news anchor or an entertainment reporter.

### ***How has being a Scholar helped you in high school?***

It's provided a lot of opportunities. Teachers and staff look at me as a student leader at school. Academically, I have a 3.9 GPA. I'm proud of myself. Everything I do now is preparing me for what's next. I'm working on something bigger than high school.

### ***What's the biggest benefit of being a 21st Century Scholar?***

I realize people are paying tons of money for college. Being in this program is helping me financially and that makes me stress-free. I'm extremely appreciative of everything this program has to offer.

## RESOURCES

We know the road to college can be confusing, which is why Indiana has created this guide, as well as many other resources, to help you succeed in high school and prepare for college.

### ***School Counselors***

The first people you can turn to for help are your school counselors. They have been through the process before, helped many other students like you and can connect you to the assistance you need.

### ***Scholars.IN.gov***

The 21st Century Scholars website is a comprehensive resource for you and the Scholar Success Program. If you need more information about the program requirements discussed in this guide, check out **Scholars.IN.gov/spp**.

### ***College Success Coalitions***

Learn More Indiana has developed a growing network of state and local organizations working to help more Hoosiers access and complete college. These organizations host local events and activities to help students and their families prepare for college.

College Success Coalition member organizations include local government, businesses, colleges, schools, local media, libraries, youth-serving organizations, service clubs, community foundations, faith-based organizations and others.

To find a College Success Coalition near you, visit **LearnMoreIndiana.org/coalitions**.

### ***Scholars Helpline: 1-888-528-4719***

Call the Scholars helpline if you have any questions about your scholarship or the 21st Century Scholars program. Or you can email us at **Scholars@che.IN.gov**.

### ***Learn More Indiana***

Learn More Indiana has answers to your questions about planning, preparing and paying for college completion and career success.

Website: **LearnMoreIndiana.org**

Helpline: **1-800-992-2076**

Facebook: **Facebook.com/LearnMoreIN**

Twitter: **Twitter.com/LearnMoreIN**

WHERE SHOULD I START TO FIND AN EXTRACURRICULAR OR SERVICE ACTIVITY?

FIRST, LET'S EXPLORE YOUR INTERESTS. WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

WELL... I LIKE READING AND SPENDING TIME WITH MY YOUNGER BROTHER.

GREAT! LET'S LOOK FOR AN ORGANIZATION WHERE YOU CAN HELP YOUNGER KIDS LEARN TO READ.





# FAQS

## ***What do I need to do to maintain the Scholar Pledge?***

As outlined in this guidebook, you must meet the following requirements to earn your scholarship:

- Graduate with at least a Core 40 diploma from a state-accredited high school.
- Participate in the Scholar Success Program that helps you plan, prepare and pay for college.
- Achieve a cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- Do not use illegal drugs or alcohol, and do not commit a crime or delinquent act.
- Apply for college admission and financial aid on time as a high school senior.

## ***What should I do if I change schools or my contact information changes?***

You should update your school and contact information in your ScholarTrack account at **Scholars.IN.gov/scholartrack**. From your dashboard, click “Edit Profile.”

## ***Why do I need to keep the 21st Century Scholars program informed about changes to my contact information?***

It is important that you receive notifications and updates from the 21st Century Scholars program to make sure you’re on track to complete the requirements.

## ***Do I have to file the FAFSA every year in high school?***

No. You must complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) during the year you graduate high school. This will be your senior year, unless you plan to graduate early. Also, you must complete the FAFSA every year you’re in college until graduation.

## ***If I graduate early, can I still use the 21st Century Scholarship?***

Yes. If you plan to graduate following your junior year, you need to notify your school counselor so he/she can inform the 21st Century Scholars program of this change.

## ***Can I use my scholarship to pay for dual-credit classes while in high school?***

No. The scholarship is only available once you have graduated high school.

## ***Where do I get the fee waiver for the SAT and ACT?***

Check with your school counselor, who may have waiver codes that will let you take these tests for free.

## ***If my GPA falls below 2.5 for a semester, will I lose the scholarship?***

You must achieve an overall, cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale upon graduation from high school. A cumulative GPA is the average of all your grades during all your semesters in high school. Even if your cumulative GPA falls below 2.5 some time during your high school career, you are still eligible for your scholarship as long as your GPA is at least 2.5 at the time of graduation.

## ***Can I receive the scholarship if I earn a GED or complete home school?***

No. You must graduate with a Core 40 diploma from an eligible high school recognized by the Indiana Department of Education to earn your scholarship.

**Scholars.IN.gov**



INDIANA *for* COMMISSION  
HIGHER EDUCATION

